

BRUCE LACKEY: *BAPTIST PASTOR, EDUCATOR, AND BIBLE CONFERENCE PREACHER*

Reprinted October 1, 2014 (first published July 10, 2007) (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

Bruce Lackey (1930-1988) was a great blessing in my life and I count it a privilege to offer the following biographical sketch of this man of God. The objective is not to glorify a man, but to glorify the God who saved and sanctified and used him.

Dr. Lackey* was a Baptist pastor, educator, and Bible conference preacher. He was a Christ-centered Bible Man. He was an all caps Bible Man.

When he was young he attended a weak Baptist church by himself and made a profession of faith, but no one dealt with him carefully about salvation or disciplined him, and it is uncertain whether he was actually saved then. His father died in a fire when Bruce was a boy. After attending community college he played piano at dances on Saturday nights for about three years.

In 1954 Bruce got right with the Lord. Gene Payne, the preacher who invited Bruce to church in those days, described his memory of this event to me in April 2007 as follows:

"When I met Bruce Lackey, I was Minister of Music and Youth at First Baptist Church in Thomaston, Georgia. Thomaston is approximately 75 miles south of Atlanta. Bruce worked in the bank which was located on the city square. The church building where I worked was a half block off the square, and every Monday morning I would go up to the bank where Bruce worked and deposit my check. Bruce was the teller, and I would invite him to church. In those days they had a few bars at the window. I have often stated when in a church service with Bruce, that when I met him he was behind bars. Of course I was referring to the bars at bank window! At that time, Bruce was playing in a dance band in some kind of a night club in Griffin, Georgia, which was located approximately twenty miles north of Thomaston. Bruce would get home late at night and that was an excuse he used for a few weeks for not coming to church. Finally, he came and if my memory serves me correctly he got right with the Lord in the first service. He began to attend church regularly, and I got him to go to jail services with me where he would give his testimony. I dare say that the first soul that Bruce ever led to the Lord was one of those inmates."

The same year that Bruce got right with the Lord he married Helen Gilbert, who was an employee at the same bank where he worked in Thomaston.

He pastored two churches: Hardison Baptist Church in Byron, Georgia, for a couple of years, and Lakewood Baptist Church in Harrison, Tennessee, for eight years.

He taught at Tennessee Temple for 19 years and was the Dean of the Bible School for about 10 years. He was the Dean when my wife studied there from 1968-1972 and when I

was there from 1974-1977. (I didn't get saved until I was 23, whereas my wife went to Bible College right after high school.)

Dr. Lackey trained many classes of "preacher boys" who revere his name to this day and who thank the Lord for the godly influence that this "man of the Book" had in their lives and ministries. A high percentage of the students at the Tennessee Temple Bible School from its inception in the 1950s through the late 1970s were men who were saved and called to preach in manhood, many coming to Temple from the military. A high percentage of the graduates went on to plant churches throughout the world and today these men form a significant circle within the Independent Baptist fold.

Dr. Lackey was the best Bible teacher I have ever had the privilege of sitting under. If I remember correctly, I took five of his courses -- New Testament Survey, Bible Prophecy, Romans, Hebrews, and Revelation. Attending his Bible lectures was like sitting down to a top grade steak dinner every day! Sadly, the courses (to my knowledge) were not tape-recorded and have not been preserved for posterity.

One of the hallmarks of Bruce Lackey's life, as can be attested by anyone who knew him, was his deep love for the Word of God. He had no sympathy with Bible ignorance on the part of Christians.

Though he was a profound Bible teacher and commentator, he always "put the cookies on the lower shelf." His doctrine was always practical. His theology was not the theorizing, "arm chair" variety. He had the heart of a pastor and his goal was never to entertain or tickle the ears or to impress his hearers with his knowledge, but "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28). Dr. Lackey's preaching was exceedingly challenging and edifying and had the effect of building Christians who are spiritually healthy and zealous for the service of God.

Dr. Lackey loved to preach expositively. At Lakewood Baptist he preached through Ruth, Psalms, Galatians, Colossians, Philippians, James, and Jude, and possibly other books. Many of these expository sermons are available in the *Life Changing Sermons* CD series published by Way of Life Literature.

He was a conscientious soul-winner. My wife, Linda, told me a story of how he led a man to Christ in the hospital. She was working as a nurse in the intensive care unit at Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga when a man was brought in with a serious gunshot wound. He had been shot in the head while trying to break into a house, and after his operation he was admitted to ICU. Though he was coherent he was paralyzed on one side. After Linda witnessed to him for a few days, he told her that he wanted get saved and that he wanted to talk to a preacher. She called Dr. Lackey, and he drove over the next day and led the

man to Christ. She said that Dr. Lackey contacted her later and thanked her for calling him.

He never failed to preach the gospel somewhere in his message and to give a salvation invitation, even when he was preaching to the faithful church crowd on Wednesday evening.

He was a master of sacred music styles on the piano. After he got right with the Lord he dedicated his skills for the Lord's service and glory and continued to develop as a musician throughout his life. Before Contemporary Christian Music became popular he was teaching his students that it was not right to use a dance style of music in the service of a holy God.

In the 1980s Dr. Lackey traveled widely as a Bible conference preacher. His "preacher boys" were pastoring churches across North America and many other parts of the world, and he had more invitations than he could fill.

Lackey's Stand for the King James Bible

Dr. Lackey was one of the few teachers at Tennessee Temple in the 1970s that had any sort of conviction about the authenticity of the Greek Received Text and the King James Bible. While most of the teachers used only the King James Bible in the classroom and only the KJV was used in preaching, the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament was used in the Greek courses. Most of the teachers were either neutral on the subject of texts and versions, or they were openly sympathetic to the critical Greek text and modern versions. One of my teachers used the New American Standard Version in the classroom in the mid-1970s.

I do not know exactly when Bruce Lackey came to a conviction about the King James Bible, but by the late 1970s he was teaching a course in Bible texts that defended the King James Bible as the preserved Word of God. He also encouraged his students to purchase an edition of the Greek Received Text, such as Berry's Interlinear or the Trinitarian Bible Society's Greek New Testament.

He read his Greek New Testament every day and taught and preached from the King James Bible, being convinced that it was expertly translated from the correct Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and believing that it needed no correction.

Bruce Lackey published two books in defense of the KJV: *Can You Trust Your Bible?* (1980) and *Why I Believe the Old King James Bible* (1987). Consider an excerpt from *Can You Trust Your Bible?*

"The King James Version was the only Bible available to most English-speaking people for centuries. The manuscripts from which it was translated were used by the majority of believers through the centuries. Thus they represent the Word of God which He promised to preserve for all generations. 'The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever' (Psalm 12:6-7). 'For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations' (Psalm 100:5).

"Almost every modern version has been made from manuscripts which were rather recently discovered, though they claim to be more ancient. These are highly touted to be more accurate than those from which the King James Version came, and have led to the charge that many errors exist in the KJV. It is the author's experience that this has caused many people to doubt whether there is any Bible in the world today that is accurate, infallible, or dependable. ...

"When the so-called facts of textual criticism produce doubt in the Bible which people have had for centuries, they should be considered as no better than the so-called facts of evolution. In reality, there are very few "facts" in textual criticism today. It is very difficult to get textual critics to agree on their conclusions which are drawn from the principles which most of them accept. Even a cursory study of the material available on the subject today reveals that there is much personal opinion and bias regarding which manuscripts are the oldest or best. ...

"The most serious problem created by the multiplicity of versions and half-truths from textual critics is that many believe that we have no accurate, infallible Bible anywhere in the world today. To say that it exists in all the versions is to say, in effect, that you can not find it, since no one can agree on the best way to resolve all the differences in the versions.

"To say that the various differences in versions are unimportant is to raise a basic question: Why make them? If there is no basic difference, why do we need them? ... Every version claims to be 'more accurate ... more understandable,' but when faced with the problem of difference with others, almost every scholar, professor, translator, and textual critic says that no major doctrine is affected, and that the differences are minor and relatively unimportant. One wonders if the motive for more and more translations might not be commercial, rather than spiritual.

"The fact is that many a Christian has had doubts, fears, and skepticism instilled in his mind by these claims of discovering 'more accurate manuscripts.' ...

"If we believe God's promises of preservation, we must believe that the Bible which has been available to all generations is that which God has preserved. Conversely, that which was hidden was not God's truth, 'which endureth to all generations'" (Lackey, *Can You Trust Your Bible?*, Chattanooga, Tenn., BIMl Publications, copyright 1980, pp. 48-52).

Dr. Lackey gave a good answer to those who claim there is error in the King James Bible. He made a clear distinction between translational *error* and translational *preference*.

"'Atonement,' in Romans 5:11, is said to be another error, since it comes from the Greek word (KATALLAGE) which is always translated 'reconciliation' in other places. It is also supposed to show doctrinal error, since 'atonement' describes a temporary condition which the Old Testament saint had, whereas 'reconciliation' describes the permanent condition of the New Testament believer. If all this is so, why did the KJV translators choose a different word in this place, from all others in the New Testament? The word 'now' indicates that they evidently believed the Old Testament doctrine of atonement to be fulfilled in the one great sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. We have 'now' received that which was only foreshadowed and promised in every bloody sacrifice that was made before the cross. There is no error here; if the KJV translators were intelligent enough to use 'reconciliation' every other instance in the New Testament, they surely must have had a good reason for choosing 'atonement' in Rom. 5:11. Every translator knows that in all translation there will be some interpretation. Such is unavoidable. This instance is obviously a matter of their interpretation, which, by the way, is clearly a correct one. Every Bible-believer knows that the sacrifice of Christ fulfilled all that was foreshadowed in the many sacrifices of the Old Testament. **Again we see that, before one charges error, it is a good idea to stop and think about what is actually being said and try to find a reason why a different word was chosen. When such is done, there will always be a great and precious truth learned.**

“‘Devils’ is another word that the critics delight in pouncing on, as a wrong translation. Everyone knows, they say, that there is only one devil (Satan), but many demons. Also, the Greek word from which ‘devils’ comes (DAIMON, and cognates) is different from that which refers to Satan (DIABOLOS). Again, a little investigation will prove this charge to be foolish, to say the least, and ignorant, at the most. Consider:

“(1) The word translated ‘devil,’ when referring to Satan, does not always refer to him; DIABOLOS is translated ‘slanderers’ in 1 Timothy 3:11, ‘false accusers’ in 2 Tim. 3:3 and Tit. 2:3. In all three places, it refers to human beings. Again, we see the necessity of translating in a manner which will be understood by the readers.

“(2) Devil in the English language has multiple meanings; it may refer to Satan, demons, a very wicked person, an unlikely person (that poor devil), a printer’s devil (apprentice or errand boy), and various other persons, as any good English dictionary would show. To say that ‘devil’ is an erroneous translation, because it can only refer to Satan, is to ignore the dictionary! We must say, again, that no translation always renders a particular Greek word with the same English word in all places. In all translations there is some interpretation. Translators must use words which the people will understand. To say that calling a demon a devil is an error is to show ignorance of the English language.

“Then, someone is always trying to show that a particular verb tense has been wrongly translated. It has been well said that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, and this can correctly be applied to a little knowledge of Greek. To assume that the aorist tense, for instance, always means punctiliar action, is to ignore what Greek grammars teach: Greek tenses have flexible meanings and must be interpreted according to context. For example, the word ‘building’ in John 2:20 is aorist, but it cannot describe action which happened ‘at once,’ as some people insist that the aorist always does. In that sentence, the Jews were referring to the 46 years which were required for the building of the temple. Forty-six years is certainly not ‘at once’!

“2 Corinthians 11:4 is supposed to be one of those places where a verb tense is wrongly translated, when it says, ‘ye might well bear with him.’ The tense is imperfect, which some people insist always means continuous action in the past. Why then does the KJV put this in the future? Is that an error? *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, by Dana and Mantey, gives several uses of the imperfect tense in just the way it is used here, saying that it may refer to ‘the lack of a sense of attainment.’ In other words, it may refer to something which has not yet been attained, therefore, future! In this light, no error exists in the KJV. They chose these words carefully, because the context shows that Paul was concerned about what might happen, rather than what had already occurred. In v. 3, he was afraid that their minds might be corrupted; in v. 4, he referred to the possibility of false preachers coming to them when he said, ‘For if he that cometh...’ the word ‘if’ clearly shows a possibility in the future. Once again we see that a careful examination of grammar and the context would show any honest inquirer that there is no error. Although the translation may be unusual, it is a possible one and cannot be called a mistake. **Anyone has the privilege of disagreeing with a translator’s interpretation, but if the translation be grammatically and contextually possible, it cannot be called an error....**

“Of course, this list could go on and on, but there is no real need. Some people will never be convinced. This author, however, has learned many precious truths through the years by meditating on these and other such places, trying to find out why an unusual translation was made. **Rather than treat these places as errors, why not remember that the KJV translators were intelligent and reverent scholars, and try to find out why they did a particular thing in the way that they did?”** (Bruce Lackey, *Why I Believe the Old King James Bible*, pp. 44-48).

Bible Guidelines for Clothing

One of Dr. Lackey’s sermons that continues to bear fruit today is “Bible Guidelines for Clothing.” I transcribed this sermon from a tape many years ago and published it as a booklet. Later I put it on the internet and it has spread far and wide, sometimes without proper credit being given to its author.

In this sermon Dr. Lackey gave five principles for determining how to dress, and he prefaced them with this remark:

"I hope you will get these down, because you are going to face this all your life. Fashions are going to change and new things are going to be brought out all the time. There is no use in me making up a list of what is good and what is not, because that would change next year. So these principles from God's Word will help you to decide every single item, whether it be right or wrong to wear, male or female, adult or child."

The five principles are as follows: First, is it worn by the opposite sex? Second, what does it make others think of me? Third, predominately, what kind of people dress that way? Fourth, must I use the arguments of the world to justify it? Fifth, will it cause others to stumble?

He concluded this powerful message with the following five suggestions about developing Christian convictions:

Number one, make sure your convictions are biblically based. When you believe something is wrong, you had better have a good Bible reason for believing it. You ought to know where the Bible talks about that, and if you don't think you can remember it, write it down so you can show people. Have biblically based convictions, not just opinions.

Number two, when you have a conviction, be firm. Don't waver no matter what crowd you are with, no matter what environment you find yourself in. If it is wrong to wear a bathing suit walking down the street, it is wrong to wear one in the swimming pool. The water doesn't have anything to do with it. That is why you have to be careful about where you go swimming. Do you expose your body to the lustful thoughts of others? They are going to think it whether you like it or not. Be firm in your convictions.

Number three, be kind when you have convictions. Don't be a smart alek. When the time comes to express yourself, or to say no, or to give a reason, be kind about it. Learn your reasons, and know them, and don't be nervous, and don't be angry, and don't be snappy. Be kind about it.

Number four, don't act superior. Don't act like you are better than somebody else. That's the first charge they are going to make against you, I guarantee you. Anytime you ever have a conviction about anything, whether it be about music, or drinking liquor, others are going to say that you think you are better than they are. People have been saying that for centuries. That is not anything new. So don't act superior. Just let them know you aren't going to do that thing.

Number five, if you have to talk to somebody about these things deal with the heart first. All of this is a matter of the heart. You might get somebody straightened out on the matter of the clothes they ought to wear and they still be just as lost as they were before you met them. Before I talk to anybody about clothes or anything else, the first thing I want to know is what about the heart? Have you been saved? Acts 15:9. Has your heart been purified by faith? Romans 10:9. Have you believed in your heart that God raised Christ from the dead? The first thing I want to know is about the heart and salvation. All that I said here tonight applies to those who are saved. If you haven't been saved, it's not going to help you your soul one way or the other to change your clothes. It's not going to help at all. If Jesus does not live in your heart, that is your first need. You first have to come to Christ.

If you are saved it is still a matter of the heart. If I were talking to a Christian about this, the first thing I would want to talk to him about would be the heart. Is your heart right with God? If your heart's not right with God, you are not going to be able to understand any of this. You're going to resent every argument, and resent anybody even bringing up this discussion.

God's Promise about Children

The following is excerpted from a sermon that was preached by Dr. Lackey in the early 1970s:

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)

This tremendous admonition and promise is for parents, prospective parents, grandparents, relatives, and anyone else who has a heart for children! It is absolutely reliable, since "all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. 1:20). The true and living God, who cannot lie, will keep this promise; our responsibility lies in the first word, train. But before we get to that, we must consider the way.

Some interpreters understand this to mean "his way," that is, the child's way. They say that parents and teachers must learn the natural inclinations of the child and direct him thus. To prove that this is the wrong explanation, we need only consider Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Since the verse says, "All we," that must include children. Every child has already turned "to his own way;" he does not need to be trained in it. Worst of all, the Lord describes "turning to our own way" as "the iniquity of us all," and reveals the outrage of that iniquity by telling us that it was what Christ bore on the cross. Clearly, then, we do not need to train up a child in his own way, which in God's sight is sin.

Charles Bridges said that when a child is born, two ways lie before it: the way in which he *WOULD* go, and the way in which he *SHOULD* go. That says it succinctly!

Psalms 58:3 teaches us that the child begins going his own way, which is iniquity, immediately after birth. "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."

How often does the Scripture teach that we are born sinners! All the more reason for training the child in the way that he should go. That way is God's way.

Many people do not believe Proverbs 22:6, because they have seen some child who was brought up in a Christian home turn out to be less than perfect. We seem to think that Proverbs 22:6 is a promise of sinless perfection, so that if a child does anything wrong, either the verse is not true, or the child's training was not scriptural. That is a mistake.

Another mistake which is often made regarding the promise in Proverbs 22:6 is thinking that someone is either 100% successful, regarding the training of his children, or 100% a failure. A little common sense and observation will teach us that there are degrees of success and failure. Real life shows us that there are faithful church members, even church leaders, who are not holy. And, some are more holy than others.

Parents are responsible to train their children in all that is included in "the way of the Lord." That one way would include many things. We must not only train them to be saved, but also to be spiritual. If parents fail to train their children in some particular way, they will be letting the world do the training.

Why did the Lord say, "Train?" Why not, "Lecture?" In all sports, there is a trainer. It is not training when the athletic director lectures the players that they should go out and become stars. It is training when the person who already knows what to do shows others how to do it; then, when the player does something wrong, the trainer corrects him and shows him how to do it properly. In other words, it is a process of teaching, showing, correcting, practicing, and repetition. Usually, there is a lot of trial and error.

But when is one old, in biblical language? In many cases today, people think that after children become teenagers you cannot do anything with them. Yet, ask a twenty-one year old man if he considers himself to be old and see what he says. Ask a thirty-year-old woman if she is old! Both common sense and Scripture teach us that old does not mean the teenage years.

The fact is that all young people rebel against righteousness; some to a greater degree, some not so much. Solomon is a good example; he was taught by his father and mother, according to

Proverbs 4:1-5 and chapter 31, but he rebelled in many ways. When he repented, he wrote Ecclesiastes to record his confession and repentance. He was speaking from experience, when he wrote the words of Ecclesiastes 11:9-10, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity."

He knew that young people like to be happy ("let thy heart cheer thee"), that they like to do whatever they desire ("walk in the ways of thine heart"), and that they like to do what they see immediately, not caring about the unseen future ("and in the sight of thine eyes").

Because this is true of all young people, they will do wrong. The desire of their heart is sin, according to Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

This describes the heart of every single person who has ever been born, except Christ. The testimony of Psalm 33:15 is that "He fashioneth their hearts alike." We are all alike, in the evil of our hearts. That evil does not always express itself in the same way, but the basic evil is there. All young people sin, no matter how good their training.

When the young man walks "in the ways of his heart and in the sight of (his) eyes," he is sinning, because the verse ends by saying, "for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Every young person rebels! Some do it outwardly and brazenly; others keep it inside. When the rebellion shows itself, many parents think they are failures, or that the Bible verse is not true, or is not for our dispensation, or that scriptural training did no good, or some other such depressing reaction. To the contrary, when we see the rebellion, or learn later that it existed in the heart, we should realize that this simply proves the Bible!

Another proof of this is found in Hebrews 12:2, where Christ is called "the author and finisher of our faith." Most of us realize that we cannot be the author of someone's faith; we cannot make people believe. We give the Word, but God does the work which results in believing (see John 6:29). We also need to realize that we can no more be the finisher than we could be the author! Our witness and our training are necessary, but we do not finish anyone's faith. That is the work of Christ, and He continues to work all through that believer's life to accomplish it.

Solomon was trained right, but rebelled in his youth. Then, when he was old, he did exactly what Proverbs 22:6 promises: he did not depart from the training of his early days.

Another example is Manasseh, the son of godly king Hezekiah. Hezekiah was certainly not perfect, but he was a praying man (read Isaiah 37 & 38), and a humble man (2 Chronicles 32:26). Most of us would like to get answers to our prayers in the spectacular way that he did! He must have trained Manasseh correctly, besides giving him some good examples to follow, because we read that even though Manasseh committed some awful sins when he was young (2 Chron. 33:1-10), he did repent when he was old. Verses 11-19 give us these thrilling words:

"And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God ... and he took away the strange gods...and he repaired the altar of the Lord. ... His prayer also, and how God was entreated of him ... behold, they are written among the saying of the seers."

In the light of all these scriptures, let us realize that the heart of every young person has the seed of rebellion in it. It is when he is old that he will not depart from the training of his youth; and "old" does not mean sixteen or even twenty-five.

Dr. Lackey's Position on Repentance

Dr. Lackey believed strongly in the necessity of repentance for salvation. In his book *Repentance Is More Than a Change of Mind* he defined repentance as "a change of mind that results in a change of action." Commenting on Hebrews 12:17, which says Esau "found no place of repentance," Lackey said: "Since there is no record of Esau trying to

change the sale of his birthright to Jacob (Gen. 25:29-34), this must refer to his effort to get Isaac to change the blessing from Jacob back to himself (Gen. 27:34). Some interpret this to mean that Esau could not repent; I think it means that he could not get Isaac to repent of having given the firstborn's blessing to Jacob. In either case, the meaning of repentance would be the same. Esau found a place to change his mind, but he could not find a place to change the action. This is one of the strongest proofs in Scripture that a change of action must take place, or there is no repentance."

Dr. Lackey's Books

Dr. Lackey was the author of several books. Most, if not all, are still in print by Bethel Baptist Print Ministry, 4212 Campbell St. N., London, Ont. N6P 1A6, 1-866-295-4143 (toll free), info@bethelbaptist.ca (e-mail), http://www.bethelbaptist.ca/books_BL.htm (web site).

Can You Trust Your Bible (40 pages)
Cremation, Divorce, and Other Matters (40 pages)
Jude: A Commentary and Self-Study (60 pages)
God's Promise about Children (24 pages)
1 Peter: The True Grace of God (114 pages)
Proverbs for the Family (88 pages)
Repentance Is More Than a Change of Mind (32 pages)
Ten Ways to Study Your Bible (78 pages)
What the Bible Teaches about Drinking Wine (16 pages)
Why I Believe the Old King James Bible (87 pages)

Testimonies about Dr. Lackey

Bruce's son, David A. Lackey, who is also a Bible teacher, wrote the following in an e-mail of April 17, 2007:

"I remember a dad who was biblical in everything he did. He did not have a godly father yet he raised us in a loving, biblical home. He taught me to adhere to the rules of Temple not because they were perfect and directly from the Bible. He said that it was a matter of integrity while he and then later I was working there. He had difficulty with pastoral counseling since he felt that exposition from the pulpit was sufficient. In his case, it probably was. I remember being taught expository preaching in homiletics and realizing that I had been seeing this modeled in front of me his entire ministry. My fondest memory of him was going up the stairs to his study at home to call him to supper and finding him frequently on his knees praying."

The following is by Jim Ellis:

"I surrendered to preach in a Southern Baptist congregation in my hometown of Bogalusa, Louisiana, in 1966 under the preaching of Evangelist Manley Beasley. At that time I had never heard of an Independent Baptist Church. The Holy Spirit and circumstances led me to Tennessee Temple Bible School. It was there that I came under the influence of Dr. Bruce Lackey, who was the head of the Bible School division.

"Dr. Lackey was an accomplished musician as a pianist, as well as a fantastic Bible teacher. I have used his teachings throughout my ministry. Under him I took Romans, Hebrews, and everything I could. One of the most outstanding subjects that stood out was his Methods of Bible Study. In this class he showed us some things that have been invaluable. ... His insight on the Book of Hebrews

was outstanding, especially on chapter six. His recommendation on Christian writers has continued to live on in my ministry. What a blessing he was and continues to be.

"I will always continue to appreciate this godly man that taught me so much."

Gary Dyess, who was a student at Tennessee Temple from 1971-74, wrote to me about an experience he had with Dr. Lackey. He said that he was backslidden when he left Temple as a very young man and that it was only after he joined the army that he got right with the Lord. On a trip back to the States he was in Chattanooga and made an appointment to talk to Lackey.

"I told him my problems, and he just looked at me and I will never forget the counsel he gave me. He said your problem is that 'you don't believe God.' He said, 'That is the problem.'" I left dejected and went home and began to ponder the words he gave me. That's exactly what I needed. It has stuck with me till this day."

The following is by Linda Cloud:

"While a student at Tennessee Temple (graduated in 1971), I was privileged to have a glimpse of Dr. Lackey's private life. I saw a very dedicated, concerned, loving father. Once he told us in class that he didn't allow his 14-year-old son to go to town or public places alone because of the possibility of bad influences. He always made it a point to personally pick up his son at school and bring him home, even though it interrupted his busy office schedule. He wanted to keep his son from bad influences and also to spend that time with him every day. My younger brother attended the same high school where Dr. Lackey's son attended, and Dr. Lackey would often bring my brother home without our ever asking him to do so. It was an unsolicited act of kindness on his part. One year the school had an impromptu vote on who was the best father, and Dr. Lackey won hands down. It must be remembered that there were thousands of students then. He had the respect of all the students, and was respected as highly as for his godly character in private as for his excellent teaching. We were always thrilled when he gave the chapel message as his preaching was consistently challenging and encouraging. In every message, his deep love for God's Word was evident, and he always challenged us to dig deeper into the Scriptures. Today, more than 30 years later, I still listen to his tapes and am greatly challenged."

Susan Brewster wrote:

"My father was preparing for the ministry at Tennessee Temple in 1966, when I met Dr. Lackey. My dad had him in college and told me what a wonderful Bible teacher he was. He was always my dad's favorite teacher. It wasn't until my junior year in high school that I really got to know him personally. I enrolled in the high school at Temple and Dr. Lackey was my Bible teacher. What a brilliant man and a man of the Word. I had never heard anyone teach the truths of God's Word like he did. He made the Bible come alive for me. His main emphasis was in memorizing God's Word. We had tons and tons of scripture to memorize for class and it was the main part of our test. He told us that without having God's Word hidden in our hearts we could never be what God wanted us to be because it was through His Word that He speaks to us about what is right and wrong in our lives. The more Scripture we know, the more God can speak to us. How true that is. In addition to his ability with the Bible was the ability that God gave him on the piano. I was singing at a Revival meeting where he was speaking. I did not have a piano player to accompany me, but when I was practicing Dr. Lackey came over and said, 'What key is your song in?' I said, 'I'm not sure.' He said, 'Well, just start singing and I will find the key.' I said, 'Are you playing for me?' He said, 'Yes,' and I was shocked. I started singing, and he started playing in the key I was singing in. Then he said, 'Here, try it in this key, you might like it better.' I did. He was playing the song by ear and he made it sound wonderful. I feel that God had blessed his hands. That meant a great deal to me, because it was an unexpected blessing. I think of him often and what a loss when God took him home. I am so grateful that I had the privilege to talk with him and to sit under his Biblical teaching and benefit from his musical talent. When God blesses a man's life, even the smallest, most insignificant things mean a great deal to those whose lives he touched."

Wilbur McBride wrote:

"Dr. Lackey was my favorite professor and I took every class I could that he taught. I will never forget the time in New Testament Survey when I almost shouted, when the Lord used him to answer a problem I was dealing with. ... Dr. Lackey always used the last few minutes of a class to answer any questions pertaining to the lesson. One man in the row where I was seated ask a question and Dr. Lackey answered it. Two or three questions later another student asked the same question, which he answered. Then a few questions later another student asked the very same question. I can still see Dr. Lackey with his right hand on his chin and his elbow in his left hand and he said, 'Preachers, let this be a lesson. You can preach it over and over and there will always be someone that does not get it.' Since that day I have never had a problem preaching the message the Lord gives me. The last time I talked with Dr. Lackey in person was in Germany. He was there to preach in a church to the American Military. As we talked he said, 'Bro. Mac, I pray for you and Bro. Grigsby's ministry to the military every morning.' I still remember the Saturday morning when Bro. Grigsby called and said, 'Mac, Dr. Lackey is with the Lord.' He told me what had happened and how they found him. I cried all day and thought, 'Lord, I know you make no mistakes but I don't understand why you would take Dr. Lackey and leave someone like me.' As I talked with the Lord, He impressed on my heart that Dr. Lackey had completed his ministry. He is still preaching the gospel around the world today through his students."

Pastor Lev Humphries of Faith Independent Baptist Church, Niceville, Florida, wrote:

"In regard to Dr. Lackey, I sat under his teaching at TTU for several classes. I had John, Romans, and New Testament survey and enjoyed every class. When he wrote the first book, 'Can You Trust Your Bible,' it was not mentioned from the pulpit at Temple. It was also not put in the bookstore. He was selling them on campus when asked. I began to buy them from him by the dozens and I would sell them on campus for him. He never asked me to do this, but was appreciative. His wife will surely remember this because she commented graciously to me for doing it. Finally one day, I decided it was time to do something about this situation. I went to the Bookstore and told the manager what I had been doing and said that it was not right for the Dean of the Bible school to have a book, teach in Bible school, and not have his book in the store. I was nice about it but I firmly stated that I had sold them by the hundreds on campus and it was time to put them in the store. They did in response to that visit and I think thereafter they put his later books in as well. My wife was also privileged to be in his classes. We both highly respect this great man of God."

Dr. Lackey's Death

Dr. Lackey died in 1988 while preaching in Ocala, Florida, of an undiagnosed tumor on the adrenal gland. I have heard several accounts of how he died, but the following was given to me by his son:

"Dad had an undiagnosed tumor on the adrenal gland. A degenerative eye problem which was causing him to see double had forced him to have many medical tests run yet none had detected the tumor. The adrenal tumor causes the body to go into overdrive for a few seconds, periodically. The doctor said that before he died an adrenal episode occurred and his body just said that was it and shut down. Death was instantaneous and painless."

When Dr. Lackey died I was a missionary in South Asia. Earlier that year I wrote to him and challenged him to write more books so that his teaching would be more readily available to posterity. He replied and told me his plans to write more books and to produce some teaching materials on video. Alas, it was not to be, for he died before he could accomplish those goals. He was only 58 years old. I have often been challenged by this to make every day count, because we don't know when the Lord will call us home.

Through his pastorate, Bible school courses, itinerant preaching, extensive correspondence, tape ministry, books, and through the ministries of those he trained, Dr. Lackey has influenced multiplied thousands.

[* Dr. Lackey's doctorate was an honorary one granted by Tennessee Temple.]

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